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BLISTER RUST NEWS SERVICE

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The State and Federal Governments are Cooperating in
the Control of The Pine Blister Rust.

More than one woodland owner has lately had his attention called to the condition of his pine woodlot because of the attack of the white pine blister rust. Blister Rust agents working for the state and federal governments are calling on pine owners and showing them what the rust is doing in their own woodlots. Many of these owners have been surprised that their pines were already attacked, for they had not realized that the rust was spreading so rapidly or that it had invaded their own town.

These specialists who are located in each of the pine districts of the Northeastern and Lake States are cooperating with the County Farm Bureaus. They give advice to timber owners on forestry matters, particularly the protection of white pine from the blister rust, in the same way as the Farm Bureau agent furnishes assistance or advice on agricultural matters. Not only are personal calls made on pine owners but demonstration meetings are held where groups of owners are shown the disease on pine as well as on currants and gooseberry bushes, and shown the best methods of destroying these bushes, which spread the disease. In some states, crews are formed and trained by the blister rust agents, who destroy these bushes for the owners or for the towns.

This work of controlling the blister rust began in 1916, in an experimental way, and on a small scale. Methods of control were perfected and costs reduced. The area protected each year from this disease increased, till in 1922 there were 472,887 acres cleared of currant and gooseberry bushes at a cost of less than 20 cents per acre. This was an increase in area of 22 per cent over 1921. The disease itself, however, has spread in this period, until at the present time it may be found in every pine county in the Northeast, and in most towns in these counties. Extensive surveys show that about 20 per cent of the white pine in northeastern New York and about 7 per cent of the white pine of Maine and New Hampshire are attacked by the blister rust in areas where currant and gooseberry bushes are still present.

The work of destroying currants and gooseberries in white pine districts must be speeded up, if great damage to the pines is to be averted. To this end, pine owners are advised to communicate with the blister rust agent care of the County Farm Bureau, or through the State Forester.

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